

Small Group Guide: THE LORD'S PRAYER: WORDS YOU THOUGHT YOU KNEW - Everyday Worship

Opening Question: What's the most valuable thing you've ever found at a garage sale, thrift store, or hidden in your home? Did you realize its value right away?

Opening Prayer: *Father, thank you that we get to come to You as Your children. As we meet tonight, would You help us move beyond empty rituals and really understand what it means to call You "Our Father"? Heal any wrong pictures we have of You, calm our worries, and deepen our trust in Your care. Lead our discussion and speak to each of us personally. In Jesus' name, amen.*

KEY SERMON POINTS

Main Ideas

1. **The Lord's Prayer is not just a prayer to recite; it's a life to live.** Jesus didn't just give us words to repeat—He gave us a framework for daily living as Christ-followers.
2. **"Our Father" was and is radical.** In the Old Testament, God was rarely referred to as Father, and then mainly as Creator. Jesus broke that distance and introduced God as a personal, caring, relational Father.
3. **God is a person, not a power.** We're made in His image as relational beings. He is not an impersonal "force" but a personal God who interacts with us.
4. **Our view of our earthly father often distorts our view of our Heavenly Father.** If our earthly dad was unreasonable, unreliable, unconcerned, or unpleasable, we can easily project that onto God and struggle to trust, draw near, or rest in His love.
5. **God is a caring Father.** He has compassion on His children (Psalm 103:13), He cares about our storms (Mark 4), and He invites us to cast all our anxiety on Him because He cares (1 Peter 5:7).
6. **God is a close Father.** He is "not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:27). He is never too busy, He loves to meet our needs, and He is near to the brokenhearted.
7. **Worry is a warning light.** Worry doesn't mean you don't love God; it often means you've forgotten (or never really grasped) how much He loves you.
8. **You can only truly call God "Father" through faith in Christ.** We become children of God "through faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26). It's a relationship, not just belief in a distant God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **Read Matthew 6:9.**
 - Jesus teaches us to pray, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name."
 - What strikes you about Jesus using the word "our" and not "my"?
 - How does calling God "Father" challenge or encourage you personally?
2. **Read Mark 4:35–41 (especially v. 38).**
 - The disciples asked Jesus, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"
 - Where in your life have you recently found yourself asking, "Jesus, don't you care?"
 - How do you usually respond in the "storm" moments—panic, fix-it mode, prayer, withdrawal?
3. **Read 1 Peter 5:7.** Pastor Dan pointed out that "cast" literally means "drop." What does it look like, practically, to "drop" your burden on Jesus instead of carrying it? What keeps you from doing that?
4. **Read Acts 17:27.**
 - How does this verse confront the idea that God is distant or uninterested?
 - Can you share a time when God felt especially close to you in a practical, real-life way?
5. **Read Psalm 103:13.**

- How is God’s compassion different from human compassion—even from a good parent’s compassion?
 - In what area of your life do you most need to experience God’s compassion right now?
6. **Earthly fathers vs. Heavenly Father:** Pastor Dan talked about how an unreasonable, unreliable, unconcerned, or unpleasable dad can shape how we see God.
 - Without dishonoring anyone, how has your experience with your earthly father (or lack of one) affected how you naturally think about God?
 - What truths about God from this sermon correct those distorted images?
 7. **From ritual to relationship:** Many of us have memorized prayers or Christian routines we can say or do without thinking.
 - Where do you see “ritual” creeping into your relationship with God—things you do or say on autopilot?
 - What is one concrete way you can make your time with God more relational and less mechanical this week?
 8. **Fact vs. feelings:** Pastor Dan emphasized choosing fact over emotion: we know God cares, even when we don’t feel it.
 - What “facts” (truths from Scripture) about God as Father do you need to rehearse when your feelings tell you otherwise?
 - How can we help each other in this group remember these truths when worry is “waving its flag”?

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS (Choose 1 or 2 that apply to you.)

1. **Rewrite the Lord’s Prayer (first line) in your own words.** Take “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name” and rewrite it as a personal prayer in your journal—using words that express how you want to approach God as your Father.
2. **Name and drop one burden.** Identify one specific worry (finances, health, family, work). Each day this week, verbally pray: “Jesus, I’m dropping this on You because You care for me” and refuse to mentally pick it back up—when it returns, repeat the same prayer.
3. **Replace a lie with truth.** Write down one false belief you carry about God as Father (e.g., “God is disappointed in me unless I perform”). Under it, write a verse from this sermon (1 Peter 5:7; Psalm 103:13; Acts 17:27; Galatians 3:26) that tells the truth. Read that truth aloud daily.
4. **Intentional Father-time.** Set aside 10–15 minutes at least three times this week for “unstructured time” with God—no agenda, not even a reading plan. Just talk to Him as Father and sit quietly, acknowledging that He is close and He cares.
5. **Encourage like a father.** This week, intentionally encourage one person (a child, spouse, friend, or someone in need of affirmation). Tell them specifically what you appreciate about them. Let God’s fatherly heart flow through you as you speak.

MEMORY VERSE for the Week:

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7, NIV)

Closing Prayer: *Father, thank You that we can call You “our Father” because of Jesus. Thank You that You are caring, close, and never too busy for us. Where our view of You has been distorted by past experiences, would You gently correct and heal us? Help us this week to drop our worries on You and to live as children who are deeply loved, not as people trying to earn Your approval. Keep these truths fresh in our hearts as we go. In Jesus’ name, amen.*